(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken to check chemical disasters?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Government had constituted a Central Crisis Group (CCG) under Rule 3 of the Chemical Accidents (Emergency, Planning, Preparedness & Response) Rules, 1996 formulated under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. The CCG has held two meetings so far. Some of the important recommendations made by the CCG relate to procedure for functioning of the CCG during crisis, constitution of a Co-ordination Committee for immediate handling of crisis, publishing of list annually of the major accident hazard units in the country and major chemical accidents including the crisis alert system, conduct of hazard analysis survey for hazard prone industrial pockets, preparation of off-site emergency plans and training of response personnel in the country.

(c) A set of Rules for accident prevention and emergency preparedness entitled Manufacture, Storage and Import of Hazardous Chemical Rules, 1989 and Chemical Accidents (Emergency, Planning, Preparedness and Response) Rules, 1996 under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 have been notified. The Government has also initiated many schemes to check chemical disasters vis-a-vis to conduct Hazard Analysis Surveys, Preparation of Off-site Emergency Plans, Establishment of Emergency Response Centre and Poison Control Centres, financial assistance for infrastructure development of implementing authorities and to conduct training courses.

Report of Tata Energy Research Institute on Environmental Degradation

3403. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Miniser of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per the reprots of the Tata Energy Research Institute study, the country is loosing 10% of its national income due to environmental degradation; availability of fresh water has reduced by two third; soil degradation has increased by almost 800 lakh acres; and more than half of the forest area is covered by degraded forests; and

(b) if so, what action Government are taking in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABULAL MARANDI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Central Government has formulated National Policy Statement on Abatement of Pollution and have also enunciated National Conservation Strategy for Environmental Protection and Resource Conservation. Specific steps taken to control pollution and environmental degradation include the following:

— industrial pollution control and its implementation through concerned State Pollution Control Boards/ Pollution Control Committees;

— identification of critically polluted areas for restoration of environmental quality in these areas;

— prevention and control of river pollution including regulation and disposal of industrial effluent and domestic sewage;

— sitting of industries is being regulated under EIA notification and the environmental conditions stipulated while granting clearance to the industries are monitored for their compliance.

— National River Conservation Plan (NRCP) for 14 major rivers and National Lake Conservation Plan (NLCP) for 10 prominent lakes have been evolved to check degradation of fresh water sources;

National Afforestation & Eco-Development Board (NAEB) has launched a programme of eco-regeneration with the help of voluntary organisations.

Shortfall in supply of sugar through PDS

3404. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Miniser of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that availability of sugar for distribution through PDS is likely to fall considerably against the demand from July, 1998;

(b) if so, what is the estimated monthly shortfall in the supply of sugar through PDS as against the normal requirement;

(c) what are the reasons therefor; and

(d) what measures have been taken by Government to meet the sugar requirement in full for the beneficiaries of PDS system in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) to (d) The share of levy sugar out of the production during sugar season 1997-98 (October-September) is expected to be about 40.5 lakh tonnes as against the requirement of about 48 lakh tonnes for distribution of levy sugar through PDS. The Government have decided to meet this shortfall through purchase from the freesale quota from the sugar mills during 1998.

Decision on sale of sugar through PDS

3405. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Miniser of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a final decision has been taken on the question relating to sale of sugar through the Public Distribution System after the recent meeting with the State Food and Civil Supplies Ministers; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the fresh guidelines issued in this behalf?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) to (b) The matter is under examination in the Government.

Retail price of essential food-items in the open market

3406. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the change in the retail price in the open market of the items like rice (different varieties), wheat, dals (different varieties), suji, edible oil, salt, sugar, soap, during the last hundred days and the details thereof; and

(b) the response of Government thereto and the measures contemplated thereon in terms of the strengthening of the public distribution system?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS (SHRI SATYAPAL SINGH YADAV): (a) A statament showing the retail prices of rice, wheat, dals, suji, edible oils, salt, sugar and soap for the last hundred days in four major cities is given in Statement *(see below)*

(b) The Government has accorded the highest priority to the control of prices of essential commodities. Apart from certain long term measures to increase the production of essential goods, imports under Open General Licence (OGL) of items which are in short supply like edible oils and pulses are being permitted in order to augment the total availability of these items. Recently, the import duty on edible oils has been reduced from 25% to 15%. In order to alleviate